

Priority Issues

State Bonding Program

Minneapolis will seek funding for several projects as part of the State's biennial bonding bill.

- ◆ The City of Minneapolis' priorities will be \$12 million for the Empowerment Zone and \$30 million for the Planetarium Space and Discovery Center. (The City will also seek a sales tax exemption for construction materials for the Minneapolis Central Library and the Planetarium projects.)
- ◆ Minneapolis will also request \$35 million for the Guthrie Theater, \$10 million for the Shubert Theater and \$2 million for the American Indian Business Development Center.

Affordable Housing

The reduction in Federal support for affordable housing, combined with a tight housing market, has left many Minnesotans financially unable to live in a safe, decent home. Affordable housing is a statewide dilemma that impacts all levels of government. The tax reform legislation of 2001 drastically reduced taxes for rental housing – this should help to spur the construction of more rental housing as well as improve maintenance of existing rental housing. However, increasing the supply of rental housing will not address, in and of itself, the multiple aspects of the affordable housing crisis.

- ◆ Minneapolis supports increased funding to alleviate the immediate need for shelter for the homeless.
- ◆ Minneapolis supports the creation of statewide regulations and incentives, including density bonuses for inclusionary housing.
- ◆ Minneapolis supports increased funding for the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.
- ◆ Minneapolis supports expanding the scope of the sales tax exemption for housing projects that provide affordable housing.
- ◆ Minneapolis supports the creative use of state bond proceeds to facilitate affordable housing.
- ◆ Minneapolis opposes the phase out of the 4(d) property tax classification.
- ◆ Minneapolis supports the use of mortgage registry and deed tax for affordable housing purposes.

Transportation

An expanded and properly financed public transit system is crucial to both Minneapolis and the metropolitan area. For Minneapolis, a quality system is needed to ensure the mobility of residents who do not own automobiles, to ensure the growth of downtown, and to provide Minneapolis residents – both those with and without vehicles – convenient transportation to jobs throughout the region. For the region, a greatly expanded public transit system is needed if Smart Growth initiatives are to succeed. The 2001 Legislature removed financing for the metropolitan transit system from the property tax and made it a State responsibility.

- ◆ The City of Minneapolis supports legislation to significantly increase the level of funding for transit.
- ◆ Minneapolis will oppose legislation that would negatively impact Light Rail Transit (LRT) either in the building stage or during operations, or that would treat LRT differently from other regional transit projects.
- ◆ Minneapolis supports unrestricted funding for commuter rail with priority for the Northstar Line.
- ◆ Minneapolis holds the position that approval of the revised Crosstown project should be contingent upon the project including an adequate public transit component.

Local Government Finance

The 2001 Legislature enacted major property tax reforms that have had a direct impact upon cities and their ability to finance local efforts. However, the 2001 legislation did not address the underlying formulas for the Local Government Aid (LGA) program; instead it created an "LGA Reform Account" with the intent of revising the formulas in the 2002 Session.

- ◆ The City of Minneapolis strongly holds that LGA or a similar program must continue to be a major part of municipal financing.
- ◆ The position of the City of Minneapolis is that a new LGA formula should recognize need, overburden and ability to pay.
- ◆ Minneapolis supports the continuation of limited market value for homesteaded properties.
- ◆ Minneapolis holds that levy limits should not be altered.
- ◆ Minneapolis opposes legislation that would enable a reverse referendum.



Supported Issues

Emergency Preparedness

Given the events of September 11, 2001, the Governor has proposed an emergency preparedness package for the 2002 Session. At this time, the package contains only policy recommendations and makes no specific funding proposals. The City of Minneapolis will advocate for a number of measures which should be included in the Legislature's discussion of emergency preparedness.

- ♦ The City of Minneapolis supports adequate State funding for emergency preparedness equipment and training, including simulated disaster exercises.
- ♦ Minneapolis supports an increase in the 911 telephone surcharge in order to provide adequate funding to the nearly 120 public safety answering points located throughout Minnesota.
- ♦ The best possible public safety communications network is vital in times of emergencies. Therefore, Minneapolis supports State funding for 800 Mhz radio implementation and operations.
- ♦ Minneapolis supports increased funding for the CriMNet system and advocates that the burden of local matching grants needs to be fully considered.
- ♦ The City supports measures and funding to strengthen public health infrastructure and the capacity of public health entities to respond to emergencies.
- ♦ Additional items supported by the City of Minneapolis include revisions to open meeting and quarantine laws to make them current with post-September 11 circumstances.

Development Tools

The tax reform bill of 2001 severely limited the effectiveness of tax increment financing (TIF).

- ♦ The City of Minneapolis advocates that public financial support of essential redevelopment activities must continue. Possible sources of funding include specific items in the bonding bill, alteration of eligible activities in the TIF grant fund, and an increase in appropriations for the State's Redevelopment Account.
- ♦ Minneapolis supports changes to the tax laws to encourage more private investment in existing commercial and industrial properties.

City Livability

The City of Minneapolis must continue to ensure that Minneapolis is a place where it is desirable to live, work, conduct business, attend school and visit.

- ♦ Minneapolis supports legislation which would ban the sale of lawn fertilizers that contain phosphorous.
- ♦ Minneapolis supports legislation that would test all pre-schoolers for elevated levels of lead in a child's body.
- ♦ Minneapolis supports comprehensive legislation that would fully recognize and mitigate the effect of the airport upon surrounding neighborhoods. The legislation should include a funding source, such as sales tax receipts at the airport, that would allow for full funding of the noise mitigation program out the 60 DNL (decibel noise level).
- ♦ Minneapolis opposes legislation which would make it easier to carry weapons.
- ♦ Minneapolis opposes legislation that would allow the purchase of wine in grocery stores or other changes in law that would make it easier to purchase alcoholic beverages.

Municipal Government

The ability of the City of Minneapolis to conduct business in an orderly and efficient manner is frequently dependent upon State law.

- ♦ Minneapolis seeks to expand the ability of the City's Chief of Police to appoint additional deputy chiefs and inspectors.
- ♦ Minneapolis supports altering the regulations surrounding legal notification so that the Internet can be more fully used to notify citizens of public actions.
- ♦ Minneapolis seeks the authority to extend benefits to domestic partners.

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